

Food safety certification course offered to potential on-farm food entrepreneurs

DOVER – Agricultural entrepreneurs who want to produce certain foods in their on-farm kitchens can receive food safety training and become certified under Delaware law at an upcoming workshop jointly sponsored by the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension and the Delaware Department of Agriculture.

The eight-hour “Food Safety for Entrepreneurs” program presented by Dr. Sue Snider of the University of Delaware will take place Saturday, March 25, at the Delaware Department of Agriculture, 2320 South DuPont Highway, Dover. The class will be 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Participants should arrive by 7:45 a.m. for registration and bring a bagged lunch.

Register by March 17 by contacting Debra Whitmore at debra.whitmore@delaware.gov or 302-698-4540.

Participants will learn how to identify potentially hazardous and non-potentially hazardous foods; understand foodborne pathogens and ways to control them; reduce the risk of foodborne illness; evaluate their plan for controlling potential microbial problems; and understand state regulations on farm-produced, non-potentially hazardous food items.

Non-potentially hazardous items include such things as baked breads, cakes, muffins, cookies, non-chocolate candy, jellies, jams, preserves, marmalades, fruit butters, fruit pies, herbs in vinegar, honey and herb mixtures, dried fruit and vegetables, spices or herbs, maple syrup, sorghum, popcorn, caramel corn, peanut brittle and roasted nuts.

The training, certification and inspections of farm kitchens

are required under Delaware regulations adopted in 2006, and apply to farmers who wish to process non-potentially hazardous foods in their on-farm home kitchens for sale to the public at DDA-listed farmers' markets, on their farm or at a roadside stand on or near their farm. On-farm kitchens will be inspected by appointment after participants complete the training and pass a written test.

The "Food Safety for Entrepreneurs" program is also one of the recommended trainings in the Division of Public Health Office of Food Protection Cottage Food Establishment Producer program. The Cottage Food program is meant to regulate the preparation of a limited type of food products made in residential kitchens.

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